

PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
JANUARY 26, 2021

PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT: Ward, Hogan, Haff, Hicks, O'Brien, Clary

PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT: Rozell

SUPERVISORS: Henke, Hall, Shaw, Campbell, Griffith

Debra Prehoda, Clerk

Al Nolette, County Treasurer

Roger Wickes, County Attorney

Melissa Fitch, County Administrator

Mike Mercure, Public Defender

Mike Gray, Alternative Sentencing Director

Tony Jordan, District Attorney

John Winchell, Undersheriff

Dan Boucher, Probation Director

Glen Gosnell, Public Safety Director

Tim Hardy, Deputy Director PS

AGENDA AS PRESENTED IN COMMITTEE NOTICE:

1. Call to Order
2. Accept Minutes – December 29, 2020
3. Department Reports/Requests:
 - A. Probation
 - 1) Staffing Requests
 - a) Probation Officer Trainee – Backfill – A motion to approve backfill hire on provisional basis due to COVID was moved by
 - b) Senior Probation Officer – Backfill -
 - c) Probation Supervisor – Backfill
 - 2) Department Updates
 - B. Alternative Sentencing
 - 1) Department Updates
 - C. Public Defender
 - 1) Department Updates
4. Other Business
5. Policing Reform Plan and Public Hearing
6. Adjournment

Chairman Ward called the meeting to order at 1:05 P.M. via teleconference.

A motion to accept the minutes of the December 29, 2020 meeting was moved by Mr. Hicks, seconded Mr. O'Brien, and adopted.

DEPARTMENT REPORTS /REQUESTS:

PROBATION – Dan Boucher, Director, addressed the following items:

- Staffing Requests:
 - Probation Officer Trainee – Backfill due to the retirement of the former Probation Director. The new employee starts as a Probation Officer Trainee at a grade 14 and after a year moves to Probation Officer at a grade 15.
 - Senior Probation Officer – Backfill due to a vacancy. This position has been vacant due to not being able to have a test but would like to move forward with a promotion to this position.
 - Probation Supervisor – Backfill due to the promotion of Mr. Boucher to the Director position.

A motion to approve backfills, a Probation Officer Trainee, and promotions from within the department to Senior Probation Officer and Probation Supervisor and forward to the Personnel Committee for consideration was moved by Mr. Hicks, seconded by Mr. O'Brien, and adopted.

- NYS Division of Criminal Justice Services announced possible reimbursement for some personnel costs for the 2018 – 2020 Raise the Age plan submitted. Several departments

were involved in the submittal of this plan. The personnel cost reimbursement is related to the Board moving the department from 35-hours per week to 40-hours per week. Mike Gray, Alternative Sentencing Director, stated his department submitted for 2019 \$6,600 in reimbursement for electronic monitoring and providing community service.

ALTERNATIVE SENTENCING – Mike Gray, Director, addressed the following items:

- Department Updates:
 - Impact of Bail Reform – On a regular year they handled about sixty (60) cases released under supervision and for 2020 when bail reform started they supervised two hundred thirty four (234) clients at different levels with about 56% misdemeanors and 44% felonies. They were able to accommodate this increase by using the Pre-trial Services Coordinator and the ATI eTASC person that is state funded and will advise the committee if they are unable to maintain. Last year the daily average population on electronic monitoring was five (5) offenders a day and in the month of January they are at eighteen (18) so there is more reliance on that. They are currently covering things and everything is working out well.

PUBLIC DEFENDER – Mike Mercure, Public Defender, addressed the following items:

- Quarterly reports all filed with the Office of Indigent Legal Services (ILS). Submitted a grant for \$100,000 per year and also submitted most recent request for funding through a distribution and assumes both will be approved. Presently checking all the ILS contracts to see if any extensions are needed. The 2020 revenue which is 95% ILS funding totaled \$1,514,581 (that amount includes come catch up funding). Tentatively it looks like State ILS funding will not be cut or reduced by the 20% as of right now. Working a combination of in office and home and that is working well.

OTHER BUSINESS:

Chairman Ward mentioned a NYMIR web call about NYS employer emergency plan regarding municipalities need for a plan to address other health emergencies. Tim Hardy, Deputy Director of Public Safety, is available to assist. Complimented all involved in the very successful vaccination event held on Saturday and Sunday and he received very positive feedback from attendees.

SHERIFF – Washington County Sheriff's Police Reform and Reinvention Collaborative Plan – The Clerk read the legal notice of the public hearing. The public hearing was opened at 1:26 P.M. Chairman Ward stated that the Sheriff has met with stakeholders and the plan has evolved. He stated with the department being accredited and a strong belief in community first, the Sheriff had a strong foundation to start this program. He stated the process means nothing without leadership and commitment to the plan and Sheriff Murphy is the kind of leader who is committed to the plan. He stated this has been a very transparent process to the community and stakeholders and a lot of input has gone into this plan.

Sheriff Murphy presented power point slides on the plan and available at <https://washingtoncountyny.gov/DocumentCenter/View/16061/Sheriffs-Office-Reform-Plan?bidId=> followed by a question and answer period. Public comments from Jay Bellanca – accountability and that if a complaint would be judiciously taken care of, Alan Stern – written comments can be submitted to the Sheriff's office, Robin – lack of Hispanic responses and need to recruit more females and people of color, Michael Stern – incorporating town, village and state statistics and State Police not required to submit a plan, Sheriff does not use Lexipol, T. Foster

– duties of the Office of Professional Standards position, Jacqueline Barg mentioned a lot of unsure responses in survey, any mental health professionals employed by the department or accompanying officers, and annual refresher trainings and Annabelle Greg - does only 155 survey responses reflect the 60,000 residents

The public hearing closed at 2:35 P.M. A follow up public question from Michael Jones – regarding State information.

The Sheriff would like the plan to go forward for approval by the Board of Supervisors at their February meeting. The plan has to be approved by the County Board and must be submitted to the State but the State does not approve or disapprove of the plan. A motion to move the Sheriff's plan forward for approval at the February 15th Board of Supervisors meeting was moved by Mr. O'Brien, seconded by Mr. Hicks, and adopted.

The Sheriff's plan included a request to change the staffing pattern to add one Lieutenant and one Deputy Sheriff. The Sheriff stated this is increasing the staffing pattern by one Deputy Sheriff position. This request would allow the department to have this office of Professional Standards position as well as a uniform Lieutenant position that can work with the road patrol. The Lieutenant would report directly to the Sheriff or Undersheriff. Usually new positions are addressed at budget time. The Sheriff stated the plan can go forward without having the position and he is unsure how long it would take before they could do it anyways; it might be a few months to six months. The Sheriff will meet with the Budget Officer to discuss this position. A motion to forward request to amend staffing pattern to add one Lieutenant and one Deputy Sheriff to the Personnel Committee for consideration was moved by Mrs. Clary, seconded by Mr. Hogan, and adopted.

A motion to adjourn was moved by Mr. Hogan, seconded by Mrs. Clary, and adopted.

The meeting adjourned at 2:50 P.M.

Debra Prehoda, Clerk
Washington County Board of Supervisors